

Definitions 10th Grade Level

Abdicate - renounce of one's throne of a monarchy

Anarchy - Without rule

Assimilation - process of taking in and fully understanding information or ideas

Bicameral - having two branches or chambers.

Bourgeoise - middle class

Boycott - withdraw from commercial or social relations with a country, organization, or person as a punishment or protest

Command Economy - an economy in which production, investment, prices, and incomes are determined centrally by a government

Corporation - a company or group of people authorized to act as a single entity and recognized as such in law.

Culture - the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively

Deflation - the action or process of deflating or being deflated

Democracy - system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives

Demographic - relating to the structure of populations.

Dictatorship - a political leader with absolute control of the government

Direct Democracy - a form of democracy in which the electorate decides on policy initiatives without elected representatives as proxies

Divine Right - the right that is supposedly given to a king or queen by God to rule a country

Ethnic - relating to a population within a larger or dominant national or cultural group with a common national or cultural tradition

Free Enterprise - an economic system in which private business operates in competition and largely free of state control.

Government - the governing body of a nation, state, or community

Guerrilla - a member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting, typically against larger regular forces.

Hierarchy - a system or organization in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority

Indirect Democracy - a type of democratic government in which voters choose delegates to create the laws of government on their behalf

Inflation - a general progressive increase in prices of goods and services in an economy

Isolationism - a policy of remaining apart from the affairs or interests of other groups, especially the political affairs of other countries

Laissez Faire - a policy or attitude of letting things take their own course, without interfering, literally “hands off”

Market Economy - an economic system where two forces, known as supply and demand, direct the production of goods and services

Matrilineal - the kinship with the mother or the female line

Monopoly - the exclusive possession or control of the supply of or trade in a commodity or service

Nationalism - identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations

Patrilineal - relating to or based on relationship to the father or descent through the male line

Propaganda - Information of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view

Reparations - the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged

Republic - a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives, and which has an elected or nominated president rather than a monarch.

Self-determination - the process by which a country determines its own statehood and forms its own allegiances and government

Socialism - a political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole

State - nation or territory considered as an organized political community under one government

Sustainability - meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Traditional Economy - a system in which the development and distribution of goods and services are determined by customs, traditions, and time-honored beliefs

Trust - firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something

Unicameral - A person of a legislative body having a single legislative chamber.

Urbanization - the process of making an area more urban

Definitions 11th Grade Level

Abolitionist - a person who favors the abolition of a practice or institution, especially capital punishment or slavery

Amnesty - to grant a pardon to those who have committed an offense.

Annex - append or add as an extra or subordinate part

Appeasement - Foreign policy of pacifying an aggrieved country through negotiation in order to prevent war.

Armistice - an agreement made by opposing sides in a war to stop fighting for a certain time; a truce

Atrocity - an extremely wicked or cruel act, typically one involving physical violence or injury

Bankruptcy - a legal proceeding involving a person or business that is unable to repay their outstanding debts

Bill - a draft of a proposed law presented to governing body for discussion

Blacklist - a list of people or things that are regarded as unacceptable or untrustworthy and should be excluded or avoided

Civil Liberties - rights guaranteed by the Constitution

Civil Rights - a class of rights that protect individuals' freedom from infringement by governments, social organizations, and private individuals

Confederation - an organization which consists of a number of parties or groups united in an alliance or league

Conservative - favoring free enterprise, private ownership, limited government and socially traditional ideas.

Constitution - a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is acknowledged to be governed

Corporation - a company or group of people authorized to act as a single entity and recognized as such in law.

Depreciate - diminish in value over a period of time.

Depression - a period of sharp and sustained decline in economic activity that typically includes negative gross domestic product growth and a substantial rise in unemployment, poverty and homelessness

Direct Primary - a primary in which nominations of candidates for office are made by direct vote

Disenfranchise - deprive a person of the right to vote

Due Process - legal requirement that the state must respect all legal rights that are owed to a person

Emancipation - the fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberation

Embargo - an official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country

Espionage - the practice of spying or of using spies, typically by governments to obtain political and military information

Excise - a tax levied on certain goods and commodities produced or sold within a country and on licenses granted for certain activities

Federal System - a system of government in which the same territory is controlled by two levels of government. Generally, an overarching national government is responsible for broader governance of larger territorial areas, while the smaller subdivisions, states, and cities govern the issues of local concern.

Federalism - a system of government in which the same territory is controlled by two levels of government

Fiscal - relating to government revenue, especially taxes, typically one year

Fundamentalist - a person who believes in the strict, literal interpretation of laws

Homestead - a house, especially a farmhouse, and outbuildings.

Immunity - protection or exemption from something, especially an obligation or penalty

Impeach - charge the holder of a public office with misconduct.

Impress - to procure or enlist by forcible persuasion.

Initiative - the right to initiate legislative action.

Insurrection - a violent uprising against an authority or government

Judicial Review - review by the US Supreme Court of the constitutional validity of a legislative act

Labor Union - an organization of workers who have come together to achieve common goals, such as protecting the integrity of their trade, improving safety standards, and attaining better wages, benefits, and working conditions through the increased bargaining power wielded by solidarity among workers

Legal Tender - coins or banknotes that must be accepted if offered in payment of a debt

Liberal - willing to respect or accept behavior or opinions different from one's own; open to new ideas.

Mandate - an official order or commission to do something

Mediation - a negotiation facilitated by a neutral third party

Mercantilism - belief in the benefits of profitable trading; commercialism

Naturalization - the process to become a citizen if you were born outside of that country

Nullification - the constitutional theory that individual states can invalidate federal laws or judicial decisions they deem unconstitutional

Pacifist - a person who believes that war and violence are unjustifiable

Platform - the declared policy of a political party or group

Political Party - made up of individuals who organize to win elections, operate government, and influence public policy

Popular Sovereignty - a controversial political doctrine according to which the people of federal territories should decide for themselves whether their territories would enter the Union as free or slave states.

Precedent - an earlier event or action that is regarded as an example or guide to be considered in subsequent similar circumstances

Prejudice - preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience

Proclamation - a public or official announcement, especially one dealing with a matter of great importance

Progressive - developing gradually or in stages; proceeding step by step

Prohibition - the prevention by law of the manufacture and sale of alcohol, especially in the US between 1920 and 1933.

Proprietary - relating to an owner or ownership

Protectorate - a state that is controlled and protected by another

Radical - relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough

Ratification - the action of signing or giving formal consent to a treaty, contract, or agreement, making it officially valid

Recall - officially order (someone) to return to a place.

Recession - a business cycle contraction when there is a general decline in economic activity

Referendum - a general vote by the electorate on a single political question which has been referred to them for a direct decision

Reservation - an area of land set aside for occupation by North American Indians or Australian Aboriginal people.

Revival - an improvement in the condition or strength of something

Sabotage - deliberately destroy, damage, or obstruct something, especially for political or military advantage

Secular - denoting attitudes, activities, or other things that have no religious or spiritual basis

Sedition - conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a state or monarch. An activity or communication aimed at overthrowing governmental authority.

Sharecrop - cultivate farmland giving a part of each crop as rent.

Socioeconomic - relating to or concerned with the interaction of social and economic factors

Sovereignty - the authority of a state to govern itself or another state.

Stock - the capital raised by a business or corporation through the issue and subscription of shares.

Sweatshop - a factory or workshop, especially in the clothing industry, where manual workers are employed at very low wages for long hours and under poor conditions

Tariff - a tax or duty to be paid on a particular class of imports or exports

Tax - compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits, or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions. Used to fund public works projects

Temperance - abstinence from alcoholic drink

Tenement - a room or a set of rooms forming a separate residence within a house or block of apartments.

Treason - the crime of betraying one's country, especially by attempting to kill the sovereign or overthrow the government

Unconstitutional - not in accordance with a political constitution, especially the US Constitution, or with procedural rules

Veto - a constitutional right to reject a decision or proposal made by a law-making body

Definitions 12th Grade Level

Apportioned - divide and allocate

Autocracy - system of government by one person with absolute power

Census - an official count or survey of a population, typically recording various details of individuals

Coalition - an alliance for combined action, especially a temporary alliance of political parties forming a government or of states

Compact - a formal agreement or contract between two or more parties.

Constituent - being a part of a whole

Constitutionalism - constitutional government

Copyright - the exclusive legal right, given to an originator or an assignee to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material, and to authorize others to do the same

Electorate - all the people in a country or area who are entitled to vote in an election

Eminent Domain - the right of a government or its agent to expropriate private property for public use, with payment of compensation.

Established Clause - prohibits the government from making any law "respecting an establishment of religion." This clause not only forbids the government from

establishing an official religion, but also prohibits government actions that unduly favor one religion over another

Executive Agreement - an international agreement, usually regarding routine administrative matters not warranting a formal treaty, made by the executive branch of the US government without ratification by the Senate

Gerrymandering - manipulate the boundaries of an electoral constituency so as to favor one party or class.

Incumbent - person seeking reelection to the same position

Indictment - a formal charge or accusation of a serious crime

Libel - a published false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation; a written defamation

Martial Law - involves the temporary substitution of military authority for civilian rule, used in cases of civil unrest to protect the integrity of the system in place.

Oligarchy - a small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution.

Patent - a government authority or license conferring a right or title for a set period, especially the sole right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention.

Precinct - the area within the walls or perceived boundaries of a particular building or place

Prior Restraint - judicial suppression of material that would be published or broadcast, on the grounds that it is libelous or harmful. In US law, the First Amendment severely limits the ability of the government to do this.

Public Policy - a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives.

Quorum - the minimum number of members of an assembly or society that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

Rider - a condition or proviso added to something already said or decreed

Rule of Law - a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights principles.

Session - a meeting of a deliberative or judicial body to conduct its business

Slander - the action or crime of making a false spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation

Trademark - a symbol, word, or words legally registered or established by use as representing a company or product

Unitary System - a governing system in which a single central government has total power over all of its other political subdivisions

Ward - an administrative division of a city or borough that typically elects and is represented by a councilor or councilors